



EMC FAQ's

THE BASICS

Q. What is Stewardship?

A. Stewardship means taking care of something that belongs to someone else. In an example from popular culture, in *The Lord of the Rings*, when the King of Gondor is in exile, a Steward rules in his place. In the Bible, we are called stewards of God's creation. That means everything in creation belongs to God, not us. That includes our planet, our bodies, our fellow human beings, and our financial resources. And we are called to take care of those things for God and to wisely use those gifts for godly purposes.

Q. What is Annual Stewardship?

A. In the Episcopal Church, stewardship commonly refers to stewardship of money. Typically, churches will conduct a stewardship campaign every fall where we invite members to make a financial pledge for the church's annual budget in the coming year. In other words, we ask members to prayerfully commit to a certain level of stewardship of money to fund the church's mission and ministry for one year. Hence, annual stewardship.

Q. Is St. Francis funded by the Diocese or National Church?

A. No. We receive no funds from the diocese or from the National Episcopal Church. Our church ministries are 100% funded by pledges and donations from parishioners like you.

Q. Are you asking me to give money in 2021 for 2022?

A. We are not asking you to give anything for 2022 now. The church is simply asking you to make a pledge for 2022. In other words, let the church know what you plan to give during the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2022.

Q. What is a pledge?

A. An annual pledge is a commitment in faith to give to the church's annual operating budget in the coming year (in this case for 2022).

Q. Why is the annual stewardship campaign happening now?

A. Traditionally, St. Francis in the Fields, along with most Episcopal churches, conducts a Stewardship campaign in the fall for the following year. This takes the guesswork out of planning next year's budget and gives the finance committee and ultimately our vestry (our 15-person board of elected laypersons) plenty of time to plan ahead. It also helps the rector and staff know what the budget will allow for next year.

Q. What does the 2022 Budget include?

A: The 2022 budget includes:

- Clergy and lay staff salaries at current levels
- Resources to continue excellent offerings in the areas of Worship, Formation and Mission.
- Ongoing expenses for utilities, maintenance, insurance, and upkeep.

UNDERSTANDING GIVING

Q. Is the church asking members to increase their annual pledge?

A. The vestry hopes to maintain current staffing and programming levels in 2022. It is possible that some members may decrease their giving, depending on various circumstances. Those members who sense God's call to increase their pledge will help the parish continue our mission to be a community of stability in unstable times.

Q. When I make a pledge, what will the money be used for?

A. Pledges in our annual stewardship campaign go towards the operating budget of the church. This includes all of the expenses that support day-to-day ministry at St. Francis in the Fields. It covers things like Communion

bread, livestreaming costs, programming for all ages, utilities, diocesan ministries, maintenance, and staff salaries. The annual stewardship campaign is completely separate from capital campaigns, which raise dedicated funds for improvements and additions to our physical spaces.

Q. How much should I give?

A. St. Francis in the Fields encourages our members to use the biblical standard of the tithe (Numbers 18:21). Of course, this is a decision for each household to reach prayerfully. We are grateful for all gifts. Our median pledge for 2020 was \$2768, and our average pledge thus far for 2021 is \$5094.

Q. What is a tithe?

A. Tithe means “tenth,” or 10%, of annual income. If you feel you can’t give at that level, we still encourage you to think about your giving in terms of percentage of income. If you’re retired or on a fixed income, a tithe might mean something different at this stage of life. The important thing is that God calls us to joyfully give towards the work of the church from what God has given us.

Q. Do we talk about money too much?

A. We have talked about money due to the recently completed Playground fundraising campaign. As you entrust your gifts to St. Francis in the Fields, we believe it’s important to let you know how those gifts are being put to use. The annual Stewardship campaign, however, is just six weeks as in past years. All healthy families, including church families, communicate openly and honestly about money. For Christians, money is not secret or taboo. It belongs to God. Jesus talked about it a lot. We feel six weeks a year is reasonable.

THE DETAILS OF GIVING

Q. How can I submit my pledge?

A. We encourage all members to fill out and submit their pledge card online, if possible, at stfrancisinthefields.org/giving. Physical pledge cards were also mailed to all members and will be available at our church office and any in-person worship services. Completed physical pledge cards may be returned via U.S. mail, in the offering plate, or in the parish office.

Q. Can I pay my 2022 pledge now?

A. Yes. Each year, some members choose to pre-pay next year's pledge in the current year. They often do this for tax planning purposes. When you pre-pay, the church deposits the monies now, but will keep these gifts in a separate account and will not use them until 2022. To pre-pay, please contact our bookkeeper, Cynthia Paris: cynthiap@stfrancisinthefields.org or 502-228-1176, ext. 0340.

Q. Once 2022 rolls around, how do I send in monies towards my pledge?

A. There are several ways:

(1) Give securely online. Go to www.stfrancisinthefields.org/giving to make a pledge or gift. You can give via credit card or bank transfer; you can also set up automatic recurring giving.

(2) Set up a recurring gift using your bank's online bill pay service.

(3) Mail or drop off a check to the church office. Be sure to write "Annual Pledge" on the memo line.

(4) Place a check or cash in the offering plate at any of our in-person services. If you use a check, please write "Annual Pledge" on the memo line. If you use cash, put it in an envelope that has your name and "Annual Pledge" written on it.

(5) Transfer stock or other securities. Contact our Bookkeeper, Cynthia Paris, with any questions about how to give: cynthiap@stfrancisinthefields.org or 502-228-1176, ext. 0340.

Q. How often should I make a contribution towards my pledge?

A. That's up to you. Members give weekly, monthly, quarterly, or in a one-time contribution. Use your pledge card to let us know when to expect your contributions. If your giving schedule changes, please let us know.